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The Proclamation of Emancipation.

SPEECH

OF

CHARLES D. DRAKE,

DELIVERED IN

Turners' Hall, St. Louis, January 2^d 1863.

FELLOW-CITIZENS: Never has it been my duty to address a popular assemblage, under circumstances more solemn and momentous than those in which the American people are now placed. Were I to give way to expressions of mere personal feelings, it would be difficult to define the mingled emotions with which I have accepted the invitation to appear before you on this occasion. But I have endeavored to put aside all feeling, save that which yearns toward my beloved and suffering country, and every purpose but that which binds me, in life or in death, to her welfare and honor. I am no politician; I belong to no party; I have nothing to ask for myself at the hands of the people, but to be recognized as one ready to do anything in that holy cause, and to be anything that is farthest removed from a traitor, [applause] whether such as skulk from our soil, southward, to help slay their patriot brothers, or such as hang back under the folds of the old Flag, that they may, while enjoying its protection, more surely aid in betraying and dishonoring it. Between such and me, I thank God! there is not, nor ever can be, any more concord than between fire and water; but discord, antagonism, and strife, now and evermore, until the venom of treason shall cease to poison their hearts, and to fire their brain with parricidal madness. [Applause.]

Indulge me, however, in a single remark as to my past position with reference to the subject which rises in this hour above every other—the institution of SLAVERY. I desire to preface the words which I deem it my duty to utter here, with the reiterated declaration, that I am not,

nor ever have been, a fanatic against Slavery as a domestic institution, nor have I ever been connected for an hour with any party or association, which struck at Slavery in that character. I have always, however, viewed Slavery a sore evil and a vast misfortune to our country, [applause] and was ready to have its removal by proper means, as one of the greatest blessings which a kind Providence could vouchsafe us. [Great applause.] When, therefore, I speak as I shall to-night of Slavery, let no man say that I give utterance to any other than the opinions and convictions, which the horrid scenes of the last two years have fairly burned into my mind and heart, against the preconceptions of nearly thirty years. When I strike at Slavery, it is because Slavery strikes at my country; and for that I would STRIKE IT DOWN! [Immense and prolonged applause.]

During those two years, we have witnessed the bloody climax of a conspiracy, begun in the preceding generation, to enthrone Slavery as a political power in this land, and to extend its sway over adjacent countries, in the wild hope that, in the grasp and under the lead of the indomitable Anglo-Saxon race, it might become—what it had failed to become in any other hands—a *Power in the earth*. It is too late in the day for the arch-traitor, Jefferson Davis, to delude the world with such lying words as those quoted in one of the resolutions reported by your committee, affirming that he and his armies “are not engaged in a conflict for conquest, or for aggrandizement.” Does he comprehend the import

of language? Does he know what conquest means? Does he suppose that the world has turned idiot, not to see that the South is aiming to strip by conquest from the United States a large part of its territory, three thousand miles of its sea-coast, and the mouth of that great Mississippi, whose waters roll in ceaseless and stately flow past this city of our habitation? Is there no vision of aggrandizement in that empire of the "*Golden Circle*," which, sweeping from the capes of Virginia down to Cape Sable, and careering around the shores of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, was to plant its farthest standard in some yet unthought-of point in South American wilds? And does he believe humanity in its dotage, that it cannot see that that standard is to be borne onward in its blood-stained march of piracy and subjugation, by Slavery and for Slavery? No, my friends, he believes no such miserable folly. He knew, long years ago, and he knows now, better than any but his co-conspirators could know, that a vast EMPIRE OF SLAVERY was the promise of his and their treachery to the noble REPUBLIC OF FREEDOM, which gave them birth, and nurtured them into men of mark, only, as time has proved, that they might be more powerful and dangerous than common men in their accursed treason. [Applause.] It suits their purpose to deny now what two years ago they defiantly proclaimed; but men do not forget, nor can the world be mocked. The Ethiopian does not change his skin, nor the leopard his spots; nor have Southern traitors abandoned the infinitely atrocious purpose to destroy this blood-bought Union, for "*THE SPREAD OF SLAVERY.*" [Great applause.]

Your committee have, therefore, rightly judged, that in the very fore-front of the declarations of this meeting should be proclaimed anew the great and solemn truth, that it is SOUTHERN SLAVERY, embodied in and acting through its lawless and conscienceless aristocracy, that has drenched this land in blood. [Great applause.] Why should not that truth be declared, not only here and now, but everywhere and all the time? Of what avail is it to us, to our country, or to the cause of humanity, to bury it out of sight, and parade before our eyes some specious pretext for this rebellion, which we know to be false? Shall we fear to own the truth, because some muzzled traitor amongst us scowls in impotent wrath, or because his vote may some day be denied us, for having been true to truth? Let him who will shirk this mighty issue; I meet it, at all times and in all places, alike. [Great applause.] If there was never before an occasion when it should be fairly and fearlessly met, that occasion is here and now. My voice is, and ever will be, that Southern Slavery alone

is the cause of the horrible calamities of this civil war, [immense and prolonged applause,] and the human race in all the future will join without dissent in that verdict. I would say otherwise, if I could; but like Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms, I answer: "*HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER; MAY GOD HELP ME! AMEN.*" [Renewed applause.]

What then is the essential character of this war? My friends, the judgment and conscience of the whole civilized world, when the question comes to be fully understood, never can be, never will be, aught else than that it is a war of the aristocratic against the democratic principle; [applause,] a war of an aristocratic form of society, resting upon and vitalized by a system of human slavery, against a form of society in which each individual is as free as every other; a war based upon the sacrilegious idea that Slavery is a Divine institution, and that—in the words of Albert G. Brown, late Senator from Mississippi—its "*blessings should be spread, like the religion of our Divine Master, to the uttermost ends of the earth,*" [roars of laughter]; a war for the spread of those "*blessings,*" not as "*the religion of our Divine Master*" goes forth, on the wings of a dove, bearing "*peace on earth and good will towards men,*" but as that of the False Prophet, with intolerance, wrath, fire, and sword; a war, in one word, of human Slavery, as a dominant and aggressive power, against human Freedom, as a bulwark of human rights—of Africanized Americans against Americanized Americans [immense applause]—of a proud, conceited, and ferocious aristocracy against THE PEOPLE here, and against all peoples, everywhere, that would be free. [Great applause.]

And it is not a war of *to-day* merely. It has already borne fruits which, for good or for ill, will never die. Were it terminated this hour, its influence must reach onward into the unexplored future, blessing or cursing, freeing or enslaving, brightening or darkening, till the last hour of recorded time. There is no difficulty in deciding on which side is the light, and on which the darkness. It was the light of Freedom which illumined the pathway of our fathers, in their mighty struggle, and in the formation of that grand and unequalled fabric of Government we are now detesting; and it is the darkness of Slavery under which that glorious fabric is now sought to be buried by its own children! [Cries of "True," and applause.]

The conflict is, indeed, irrepressible; as irrepressible as that between good and evil, between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, between Heaven and Hell. [Applause.] And who made it so? None but they who made of Slavery "*AN IMAGE OF GOLD,*" and "*set it*

up in the plain" of the South, and because the North would not "fall down and worship the golden image" that this Southern "Nebuchadnezzar had set up," decreed that this noble country should "be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace" of this cruel and devouring war. This, my friends, is God's own truth about this unnatural and amazing conflict. [Applause.] History has yet to record, that they who cast America into this furnace were themselves slain by its "seven times heated" flame, while she "walked in the midst" with no "smell of fire" upon her resplendent robes. [Great applause.]

If in this war Slavery was and is the aggressor; if the war was begun and is continued for "the planting and spreading of Slavery;" if Slavery has become the "golden image" which the South bows down to, and wars with us because we too will not worship it; if Slavery feeds and clothes the armies of the South; if the Southern heart is envenomed against the North for the sake of Slavery; if our free institutions, and all the hopes of ourselves and our children, are imperilled, that Slavery may be exalted, diffused, and perpetuated; about all of which there is no more room for doubt, than there is to doubt that this war exists; THEN IS THIS NATION BOUND TO DESTROY SLAVERY, wherever it is in armed rebellion. [Terrific applause.] Turn which way you may, there is no escape from this alternative, except in cowardly and abject submission to the demands of the South. If you wish peace, it can be had to-morrow, by giving up all that the South exacts; but for how long? Not a day longer than it would take the parties to prepare for a renewal of the conflict. Divide this great Interior Valley of North America, either North and South, or East and West, and there is no more peace. God has decreed its permanent dismemberment to be a geographical impossibility. [Applause.] From every State west and south of New England, except New Jersey, Delaware, South Carolina, and Florida, the Almighty has sent the waters of this great continent flowing from myriads of fountains down this mighty Valley, which must forever belong to one people, and share one destiny. [Great applause.] It is impossible for one people to own the trunk of the Mississippi, and a hostile people its mouth. [Renewed plaudits.] There is no room for two discordant nations between the great Northern lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The same political institutions must prevail over that entire region. [Cries of "good," and applause.] While the South was satisfied to let Slavery retain its original character as a mere system of domestic labor, there was no more necessity for discord,

than there is between me, a non-slaveholder, and my neighbor, a slaveholder; but when the South made a political god of "the peculiar institution," and determined, if Slavery could not expand its dominion here, to rive this nation asunder, and take up its line of march through devastation and carnage to the final subjugation of the Western hemisphere to that institution, then it became manifest to reflecting men that the die was irrevocably cast, and that upon this generation was devolved by an All-wise Providence the dire conflict between Freedom and Slavery, which is to decide forever the fate of America. [Applause.] Slavery presents that issue at the point of the sword; LET SLAVERY PERISH BY THE SWORD! [Thundering and long continued applause.]

We have long enough struck blows as in dreams at this horrid revolt, and held back the home-thrust at its vital point. We have slain the soldiers of Slavery by thousands, but bowed, with hat in hand, to Slavery itself. [Cries of "That's so," &c.] We have braved death in every form for our noble country, but found it hard learning to brave the destruction of her relentless foe. We wielded every weapon against the rebellion, but the very one that would be fatal to it. We attacked armies of white men in the front, but left untouched a more numerous army of black men behind them, without which the rebellion would never have existed, or, existing, could not have lived a month. [Cries of "good," and applause.] While we fight the rebellion we must also watch foreign Governments, which, as we are not the subjects of a dynasty, but republican freemen, have no sympathy with our struggle for national life; but rather would rejoice at our humiliation and dismemberment, even at the hands of that institution, toward which they and their subjects profess unbounded hostility. And so it would ever be, as long as we ourselves held Slavery too sacred to be assailed, though warring for our destruction. But when we learn to treat Slavery as a Constitution-breaker, a traitor, a marauder, a pirate, and a disturber of the peace of nations, and pronounce for its extirpation because it is all these, then we touch the world's heart, and the popular voice in other lands will be heard, in tones which no government, however despotic, will dare defy. [Immense applause.]

That time has come—that lesson has been learned. On the first day of January, in this year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, the President of the United States, "by virtue of the power in him vested, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and Government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary

war measure for suppressing said rebellion," did, by a solemn Proclamation, "*aver and declare that all persons held as slaves within designated States and parts of States, ARE, AND HENCEFORWARD SHALL BE FREE,* [thunders of applause] *and that the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and MAINTAIN the freedom of said persons.*" [Renewed applause.] Upon this act, which the President declares is "sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution—upon military necessity—he invokes the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

My friends, if any words have, in the history of the world, emanated from the ruler of any people, which had a more august and enduring import than those, I know not of them. An involuntary feeling of awe rises within me as I read them, and endeavor to scan their probable influence upon the future of America and of humanity. They ring out the glad peal of this nation's deliverance, or toll the knell of its downfall. Not because the fate of the American people depends upon the mere question whether some millions of negroes shall be held in slavery in a portion of our domain; but because it does depend upon the question whether the masters of those negroes—a meagre minority of this nation—shall, over the ruins of our glorious patrimony of Freedom, erect an aggressive, warlike, and ruthless Empire of Slavery. [Applause.] That is the vast and momentous issue which this Proclamation lays before the American people and the world, and concerning which the President of the United States "invokes the considerate judgment of mankind." As a part of that people we have met to express our judgment of his act. It is our high privilege and our duty to do so. Not that our action can give it additional effect; but, as ours is a Government of the people, that he may see—that all men may see, whether we are for or against this blow at the enemies of our country. And now, my countrymen, with as deep a sense as I ever entertained of the importance of a right judgment in regard to any question of public moment, I hesitate not to declare my firm and unquestioning conviction, that that Proclamation was CONSTITUTIONAL, EXPEDIENT, AND JUST, and ought to be enforced with all the strength of the Army and Navy of the United States, to the end that the power of Southern traitors shall be broken, shattered, and crushed, for ever and ever! [Immense, long-continued, renewed, and prolonged applause.]

I am not unaware that there are true Unionists who do not approve the action of the President. To such I would say, whatever your past judg-

ment as to the expediency of such a measure, this is not the time to moot that point. The question is not, Shall the act be done? It is done! [Cries of "Good, good," and applause.] The point is, Will you stand up to it like patriots, or will you falter in your devotion to the Union, because henceforth its flag is to carry freedom to the slaves that make the very thews and sinews of the rebellion?

Do you withhold approval because you do not see that the Constitution authorizes it? Then take that instrument, and read and study every line and word of it, and find, if you can, one syllable that restrains the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, in keeping his sacred oath "to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution," from the exercise to the very last degree of the war power of the nation, *against the nation's enemies in arms.* [Rapturous applause.] Our fathers did not make that Constitution as a shield to its foes; and none but its foes now demand its protection against the power of the Government, wielded to preserve its own life.

Do you hold back because you do not perceive the necessity for the step? But the Commander-in-Chief, surveying the whole field of the rebellion, in its cause and probable results, and its relations to this country and to other countries, did consider it necessary, and it was for *him alone* to judge. Will you revolt against his judgment? ["No! no! no!"]

Are you in doubt as to the efficiency of the measure? What avail such doubts? Do they promote the Union cause? Do they make you any better patriot? Does your devotion to your country recruit itself from their companionship? Nay, is it not weakened by their presence?

Do you say, "What is the use of the Proclamation, when we have not possession of the regions in which it is to operate, and it is therefore powerless?" I answer, that the same course of reasoning would enervate every blow; for Omniscience only can foresee whether any blow will be effectual or not. It is not for those aiming it to decide in advance that it will fail. So to decide is to insure failure.

Do you shrink aghast from the picture which rushes upon your vision, of the maddening horrors of a servile insurrection? So do I, and so does every man with the least spark of humanity in his nature: but if such an insurrection follows the promulgation of a measure that is demanded to save the life of the nation, let the dread responsibility rest where, before God and men, it rightfully belongs—upon those whose treason creates the terrible necessity. [Applause]

Are you troubled to know what shall be done with the millions of Southern negroes after they become free? I answer, that is not the present

question; but *What shall be done with this rebellion?* [Immense applause.] Soldiers ask not in battle, "What shall we do with the prisoners and the spoils when the fight is over?" but, "How shall we whip the enemy?" [Thunders of applause.] To debate what shall become of the negro, is to put that problem in the scale against your country's life, whether you intend it or not. [Cries of "Never."] Leave the future to the future: the present is our care. The instant demand of this hour is, by every available means, to overwhelm, scatter, rout, and destroy traitors. [Cries of "That's it," "That's it."] Self-preservation demands that Slavery, their idol, and the right arm of their power, be wrested from them; for their feet are on a war-path, to which we can see no end, while Slavery bears them onward. The destiny of the enfranchised negroes none but God can appoint: leave it, then, to His all-ruling Providence.

But there are those who see in this measure only a deeper embitterment of the South, and an increased hopelessness of restoring the Union. Is that true? What hope has there ever been since Sumter fell, that the Union would be preserved, otherwise than by the resistless agency of powder, ball, and bayonet? Is there a human being who still hugs the delusion, that peace is to smile upon this country again as a *united* country, except by the subjugation of this damnable rebellion? [Great applause.] If there is, let him drop that folly from his embrace, and open his eyes to the utter hopelessness of every attempt to conciliate that aristocracy, which, with a deliberate purpose, formed in some Southern minds fifty years ago, and controlling Southern action with steady sway through the past thirty years, resolved that this Union should be relentlessly destroyed, and supplanted in that fair Southern clime by "A CONFEDERACY OF SLAVERHOLDING STATES," to be, as they fondly hoped, "*the most important among the nations of the world.*" Half a century's treason, plotted and pursued through every form of duplicity, falsehood, and treachery, and blazing out at last in robbery, fire, and blood, is not to be conciliated, but with the full fruition of its desperate schemes. This Proclamation, then, makes no more hopeless what was hopeless from the moment of the rebellion's outbreak. [Immense applause.]

But, my friends, whatever the portents of this hour, in connection with this Proclamation, or with aught else under the sky, the true, earnest patriot has but one line of duty, and that is, by every act, by every word, by every thought, by every purpose, by every power granted him, to hold up the hands of the President in this war against the

enemies of our country and the destroyers of our free institutions. [Great applause.] As there is nothing in human history so horribly atrocious as this rebellion, so the imagination of man can conceive of nothing which would so shroud the world in gloom, as the blotting out of this Sun of Freedom from the firmament of nations. Wreck this Republic, and you wreck every hope of freedom in every human breast. [Applause.] For nearly three hundred years the hand of the Great Creator has shaped the destiny of America, as the home of Liberty and the refuge of the oppressed. From every country and every clime, from the heavy tread of oligarchies, from the sharp fangs of despots, from the woes and fears of bloody revolutions, from poverty, heart-brokenness, and living death, millions have found here that freedom, which they sighed for as their richest boon in life, and the most blessed inheritance they could transmit to their children. [Great applause.] Here has grown into gigantic proportions a nation, presenting the grandest development the world has ever seen of human intelligence and progress, and holding in its outstretched hands to all the earth the choicest fruits man has ever tasted of regulated and constitutional liberty. To mortal prescience that nation seemed immortal—those fruits perennial and undecaying. But in the midst of peace, prosperity, and seeming contentment, all is plunged into confusion and dismay. The lurid cloud of war envelops the land, the tread of armed legions shakes the earth, the thunders of battle fill the air, blood stains the ground, the groans of the dying fill the cars of night, and the wails of the bereaved rise to heaven from countless habitations! What enemy has done this? Have the despotisms of the Old World, tired of America's example and glory, massed their mighty columns to bear her down into the dust? Has her ancient foe challenged her to a third war of Independence? Has any other nation invaded her peaceful shores? No, my friends; would God it were any or all of these, rather than what it is! [Applause.] Her own sons are her assailants! Americans are pouring out the life-blood of America! The heirs of liberty are destroying their precious birthright! The children of the Constitution are hacking and battering that glorious fabric, every seam of which was cemented with their fathers' blood, and every arch of which is vocal with the prayers and benedictions of the illustrious dead! [Applause.] And all for what? Who has oppressed, who wronged, them? The voice of the universal brotherhood of man acquits this nation of wrong to them. What, then, urges on this demoniac onslaught? Let us not fear to speak the word again. Let us be true, though we

die for it! [Applause.] Speak it, write it, print it, proclaim it, that it is the ARISTOCRACY OF SLAVERY [cries of "that's it"] harling itself against the buttresses of the Constitution, to clear it out of their pathway to empire! It is the lust of power, the greed of gain, the arbitrary will of inborn despots, that hurries them on to their hellish work. Will they triumph? Not if the sons of America, native and adopted, are faith-

ful, and brave, and enduring. [Immense applause.] And shall we not be so? [Voice—"We will."] Shall we falter in the trying hour? ["Never, never."] Shall we fear to go forward? ["No."] Fear, ten thousand times more, to go backward a single step! [Great applause.] The Star of Hope leads *onward*; then let our march and our cry be *ONWARD! EVER ONWARD!* [Immense and long protracted applause.]

RESOLUTIONS

Adopted at the Meeting at which the above
Speech was delivered.

The loyal citizens of St. Louis, assembled for the purpose of expressing themselves in regard to the Proclamation of emancipation, issued by the President of the United States, on the first day of January, 1863, profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and moved by a deep sense of the obligations of duty to our beloved country in this hour of its contest for life, against the most formidable rebellion that ever assailed any government, do unhesitatingly declare as follows:

1. That it is a truth, which impartial history will affirm in all coming time, that the institution of African Slavery, as existing in the revolted States, and constituting there the creating and sustaining power of an aristocracy of wealth, which determined to extend and perpetuate that institution, was the sole impelling cause, and has been, and is now, the life of the present infamous rebellion.

2. That notwithstanding the recent public declaration of Jefferson Davis that the rebels "*are not engaged in a conflict for conquest, or for aggrandizement,*" there is no fact more distinctly marking the rebellion, than its origin in a scheme for the expansion of Slavery, and its "eventual mastery of this whole continent," even at the sacrifice of those glorious institutions which our fathers bequeathed us, and which, in our inmost hearts, we hold a thousand times more sacred than any other earthly interest, and are determined, come what may, to preserve inviolate for ourselves and our posterity.

3. That the attempt to destroy the noblest institutions of Freedom man has ever known, for the sake of establishing, extending, and perpetuating a system of human slavery, is a crime which there are no adequate terms in language fitly to characterize, for its cruelty, its perfidy, and its infamy; and the American Nation is solemnly bound to the high duty of preventing that diabolical crime, at whatever cost of blood and treasure, and if necessary thereto, to destroy the whole mass of those attempting its perpetration.

4. That when the South, with such an object in view, revolted from the Constitution of its own formation, and raised the parricidal hand against the Union it had voluntarily entered, it was plainly impossible that peace could

be restored to this land, except by the unconditional submission of the insurgents, accompanied with an express and final abandonment of their base design; or by their absolute subjugation by force of arms; or by the nation's ignominious surrender of itself to degradation and spoliation by an unprincipled aristocratic minority. We rejoice in the assured belief, that this mighty nation will not, in any extremity, consent to stain its glorious name with the disgrace of such a surrender to any power, or combination of powers, on earth. And as there is no evidence whatever that the insurgent States entertain the slightest intention of abandoning at any time the pursuit of that nefarious object; but, on the contrary, as the head of the rebellion—speaking, doubtless, the sentiments of its leaders everywhere—declared on the 26th of December, 1862, in a speech before the Legislature of Mississippi, that, "*accede it ever to be proposed again to enter into a union with such a people, he could no more consent to do it than to trust himself in a den of thieves,*" we are forced to the conviction that all efforts at conciliation or arrangement are utterly futile, and that if our country is to be saved from the grasp of the spoilers, it can only be by the prosecution of war against them, in every form and to every extremity known to civilized nations, fill the last vestige of rebel power shall be swept from the soil of America.

5. That aside from every view of Slavery as a mere institution of domestic labor, and regarding it solely as an armed rebel, aiming deadly blows at our country and our noble fabric of Constitutional Republican Government, we hold that it has, by its own murderous act, totally and finally absolved the American Government and people from all obligation to preserve or protect it in the regions where the rebellion exists, and has imposed, with all the power of an irresistible necessity, the stern obligation to destroy it, if the nation would itself live.

6. That to hold back from the destruction of Southern Slavery, while it is assailing the life of the nation, and while its three millions and a half of slaves, by laboring at home to produce food and clothing for the rebel armies, are, in effect, doubling the armed force of the rebellion,

thus protracting through years of blood a struggle which otherwise might have been terminated in as many months, cannot be defended upon any ground of justice, expediency, or Constitutional or moral obligation; and can find no apologists but among those who prefer the institution of Slavery to their country, or those who delude themselves with the fallacy, that, after years of civil war, the Southern aristocracy may be persuaded to throw aside their arms, and return to their allegiance, without accomplishing that supremacy of Slavery, for which they became the matchless traitors and pirates of all history.

7. That the war power of the Nation in its exercise against its enemies, whether foreign or domestic, is wholly unfettered by the Constitution of the United States; and the President, in time of war, is authorized, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, to direct the exercise of that power against such enemies, their raiders and abettors, in such manner as in his judgment shall best tend to their subjugation; and that whoever invokes the Constitution with a view to trammel the President's action against such parties, is himself a public enemy, or deceived by traitors in disguise, who appeal to the Constitution, only to make it aid in destroying itself.

8. That entertaining the foregoing views, and impelled by a solemn sense of the necessity which the South has

itself created, to overthrow, its deadly attempt to plunge our country into horrible and irretrievable ruin; and considering no measure too severe to be employed for that purpose; and profoundly impressed with the belief that the destruction of Southern Slavery is indispensable to the salvation of our free institutions; and firmly holding that the Proclamation of President Lincoln, issued on the first day of January, 1863, wherein, "as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion," he did "AVER AND DECLARE THAT ALL PERSONS HELD AS SLAVES WITHIN CERTAIN DESIGNATED STATES AND PARTS OF STATES, ARE, AND HENCEFORWARD SHALL BE FREE," was a legitimate and righteous exercise of "the power vested in him as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States"—was imperiously demanded by the public exigency—and may be expected to eventuate in the overthrow of the rebellion; we do, without qualification or reserve, approve and applaud the issuing of that Proclamation; and do call upon every patriotic citizen of the United States, whatever may have been his previous views of the expediency of such an act, to accept it loyally as a thing accomplished, and to rally to the support of the President, in this great and vital blow at the only intestine foe that has ever dared to assail American free institutions.







